

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1 of the specification, before the heading BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION, please add the following new paragraph.

--                   CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-055256 filed March 3, 2003.                   --

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the abstract with the following.

--       A switching device which can be small-sized by improving a shielding performance and can improve the reliability of switching characteristics. A permanent magnet disposed near stationary contacts is arranged in its pole-face perpendicularly of the axis of a moving contact member.                   --